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July #2
(Vol II)

VANTAGE™

Information for the Serious Comic Book Investor

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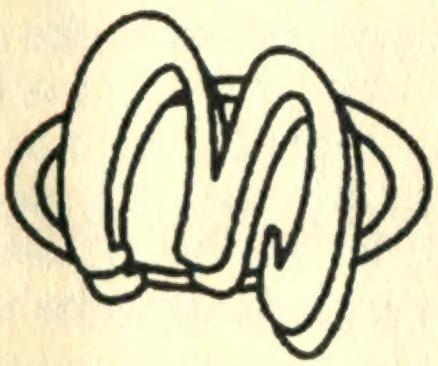
- Hidden pick from Defiant!
- Back Issues that tie into upcoming comics from Valiant!
- Important First Appearance from Malibu!
- Comics' Greatest World Sleeper Picks!



VALIANT®

YOU ARE NOT ALONE! VANTAGE BRINGS YOU SERIOUS INFO THAT YOU CAN'T GET ANYWHERE ELSE!

BLOODSHOT #6-8: INVESTMENT PICK!

WIN ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

It's easy to win the VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING TIPMEISTER AWARD! We PROMISE YOU that the VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING will be the COOLEST NOTHING that you will ever see (or not see)! Those of you lucky enough to win NOTHING must promise to keep our secret — don't tell your friends how cool it is.

Here's how to win: Just send us an investing or reading tip. Or just let us know what you did to promote Vantage. Your tip can be a hidden fact in comics, or even just your opinions on the investment market based on what you've seen at shows and in stores. Send us a copy of your own homemade reference tool, like an Image Index or Valiant character guide. Anything about comics can help us! Be sure to tell us where you got any info from (a photocopy is best, but not necessary)! If we haven't already thought of it (aww, what the heck, maybe even if we have already thought of it), we'll print your name, city, and state! You will be an official VANTAGE TIPMEISTER! Then we'll mail your GIANT NOTHING straight to you (hope your home is big enough)! Store owners can win a VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING for their store (plus 10 free copies of our latest issue for resale, our little way of showing you that you can always sell more Vantages!— proof of store ownership required)!

Mail in tips with a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope (that's an envelope addressed to you with an unused stamp on it — we'll use it to send you FREE COOL STUFF back whether you win or not).

Mail to...

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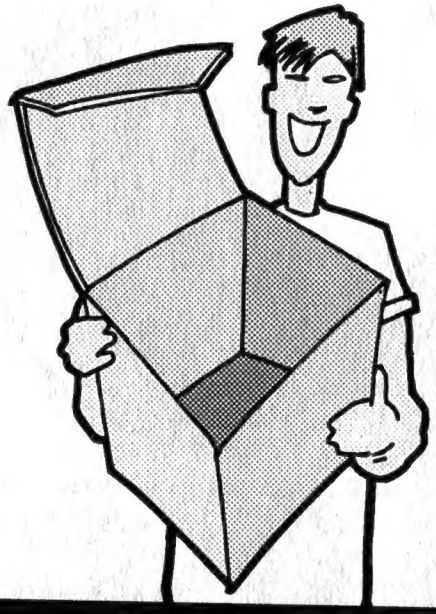
Or call us at...

414-545-3646



WIN MORE NOTHING!

We'll make no bones about it. If you're connected to industry gossip we want to talk to you. Call our office and mention this article. If you have any information that might be useful to fellow readers, let us know. Vantage is also still looking for dealer and retailer advisors. Give us a call or write us a note.

Publisher, Rob Golub. Editor, Tracy Willems. Admin Assist, John Green. Art Director, Steve Reid. Special thanks to our advisors.
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Published by Vantage. Last issue was not printed on recycled paper as we had indicated in this space. We apologize for this error. Member, Newsletter Publisher's Association (NPA). Our new phone number is 414-545-3646. If busy, dial -0652. Questions, comments, and suggestions are welcome. Address: Vantage, 10238 West National Avenue, #166, West Allis, WI 53227. Subscription information is on the back page. Vantage was founded to bring you more information and fairness. The average collector (as opposed to a large company) has been at a disadvantage for too long.

THE SUMMER OF OPPORTUNITY!

This summer continues to present itself as a fantastic investment opportunity. We have three well-marketed new universes being introduced simultaneously. Comics' Greatest World, Defiant, and the Ultraverse all have strong creative staffs and good concepts behind them. At the same time we're hit with a big sales pitch from Marvel, DC, Image, and Valiant — the public will not have enough money to go all the way around. In other words, **Vantage** expects that the print runs on the early issues of these three universes won't be too high for investment purposes. Is there some risk? Of course. However, the opportunity here is tremendous and if you invest in all three you can **lower your risk** by diversifying.

On a different note, we'd like to point out that it is not our intention to send the message with **Vantage** that comics are for investing only. There are lots of great reads out there, and we think that comics are for reading first (that's why we're running the **Suspended Animation** column). We also have other new features, as part of our continuing effort to make you the best informed investor that you can possibly be!

IF YOU HAD $100 TO INVEST:

Title	Total
Bloodshot #6-7, A&A #8,10, SM #16 (Valiant)	20.00
Plasm Binder (Defiant)	20.00
DHC #8-10, Comics Gr. World #1's (Dark Horse)	20.00
Solar #23, Rai #0, Bloodshot #8 (Valiant)	10.00
Mantra #1, Freex #1, HC #2 (Ultraverse)	10.00
Image Books (Esp. #1's)	10.00
Knightfall (assorted back issues)	10.00
Total	$100.00

"The above pick list is a rough guide based on research, advisors' opinions, and staff opinions - keep in mind that even the experts will disagree. "Hot" comics can lose value after months or years. You would be wise to trade or sell books before they lose value (Vantage will keep you posted on when and how to do this). Read over the facts and opinions in Vantage, examine the pick list, and then make your own investment decisions. Remember: 1) There's no sure thing. Never bet the farm on any one book. 2) Comics may be fun to invest in, but they're even more fun to read! Open up one of those sealed polybags and give comics a try!"

- Publisher Rob Golub

TOP PICK OF THE MONTH:

VALIANT INVESTMENT BONANZA!

We mentioned the mere possibility of a Solar miniseries last issue, but plans at Valiant for a Solar mini are now solidifying. Current plans call for a Solar mini which will involve the Solar-half that travels into space in **Solar** #23. Yes, the mini could seriously affect the value of #23. (about **300,000** in print).

Important: Sources indicate that Ninjak and Ivar (time-travelling brother of Gilad and Aram) are each currently scheduled to get a regular Valiant series. Ninjak's first appearance is **Bloodshot** #6 (2nd app, first in costume: **Bloodshot** #7). Ivar's first appearance is **Archer and Armstrong** #8 (2nd: **A&A** #10). Our sources tell us that the first issue of **Ninjak** is already being drawn. **PLUS, Shadowman** #16 features what is apparently the first appearance of Dr. Mirage (From the upcoming new Valiant title, **The Second Life of Dr. Mirage**). Retailers were not aware of the importance of these books when they advance-ordered them. **These are all top picks of the month and we highly recommend them as investments! Still at cover price in some stores:** #6-7, #16.

Bloodshot #8 has a quick scene that leads into the three-part "Coming of the Darque Age" storyline which runs through **Secret Weapons** #1-2 and **Solar** #25. The **Secret Weapons** team is formed by Geoff to defeat Dr. Eclipse in **Secret Weapons** #1. Beforehand, in **Bloodshot** #8, Geoff the Geomancer asks for Bloodshot's help against Dr. Eclipse — this leads into the formation of the team. Depending on how Valiant handles this, **Bloodshot** #8 could wind up being a part of the **Secret Weapons** origin!

There's a rumor going around that the "Coming of the Darque Age" leads into a big "Darque Age" storyline that affects every title in the Valiant universe. According to Valiant this is not true —

the storyline ends with **Secret Weapons** #2. Another misconception exists regarding Randy Cartier. Contrary to popular belief she's not the permanent new X-O — she's just a temp!

The **Valiant Reader** ($1.95) is designed to introduce new readers to Valiant by explaining their incredibly interwoven universe. It will be heavily overprinted so that Valiant will have it on hand throughout the summer — it is not intended as a collectible. This will inhibit (but not eliminate) the book's ability to gain value.

Bloodshot and Secret Weapons TM & © 1993 Voyager Communications, Inc,

"Bloodshot #8 could wind up being a part of the Secret Weapons origin!"

TOP PICK OF THE MONTH:

DARK HORSE COMICS # 8-10

The big investment news for Dark Horse is not **Comics' Greatest World!** What? Yes! True! No lie! Dark Horse recently introduced this mysterious "X" guy in **Dark Horse Comics** #8 (which is not a C.G.W. book). This "X" **is an important figure in Comics' Greatest World.**

The bottom line here is that retailers didn't know that a Comics' Greatest World hero would be appearing in Dark Horse Comics #8-10 and their advance orders were therefore low. In fact, **Dark Horse Comics** #8 (first appearance of X) has an estimated print run of around **70,000**. This is **very, very small.**

Dark Horse Comics #8-10 lead right into **X** #1 (the first Comics' Greatest World title). In fact, the last scene in #10 takes place one second before the first scene in **X** #1. The basic idea here is that X is this mysterious guy who battles hidden corruption in the city of Arcadia. The crooked government tries to discover X's identity so that they can eliminate him, just as the rest of the city is blissfully unaware of the sins of their administration. It sounds like fun reading.

What we've got here is a beautiful sleeper pick. Comics' Greatest World will create the demand, supply will be severely limited, and **Dark Horse Comics** #8-10 should do very, very well. Keep in mind that sources at Dark Horse have indicated to us that while only some of the characters introduced in Comics' Greatest World will get their own titles (the others will be supporting characters), **X will "absolutely" be getting his own monthly book.** Note that #8 is just a couple months old and #10 is due out now.

Last month we told you about the strength of the Arcadia titles. This month's Golden City titles have equally impressive investment potential. Golden City is a paradise that too many people want to get into. Indeed, Golden City has barricaded itself in, not allowing the people who have camped out beyond its walls to enter the utopia. What a great concept!

"The bottom line here is that retailers didn't know that a Comics' Greatest World hero would be appearing in Dark Horse Comics ."

This month's Comics' Greatest World titles all feature heroes who live in this setting: Rebel, Mecha, Titan, and Catalyst should all be good reading. As for investment potential, the Dark Horse plan remains brilliant —

1. Limit print runs on Comics' Greatest World books (limits availability which assists back-issue price rises)
2. Strong creative talent (creates demand by readers for previous issues)
3. Heavy advertising and a reputation for creative excellence (creates belief that Comics' Greatest World is a serious endeavor that could gain value). Each one of these factors is crucial.

What an opportunity! Vantage loves it!

TOP PICK OF THE MONTH:

DEFIANT SLEEPER PICK

Plasm #0 is the heavily hyped card set that introduces this new universe from former Valiant boss Jim Shooter. However, THIS IS NOT THE DEFIANT SLEEPER PICK! While most of our advisors pointed out the card set to us, only a few were enthusiastic about the binder. Those few were onto something. Although the card set may do well, Vantage sees even more potential in the under-publicized binder which is designed to hold the cards. Here's what you get when you purchase the binder:

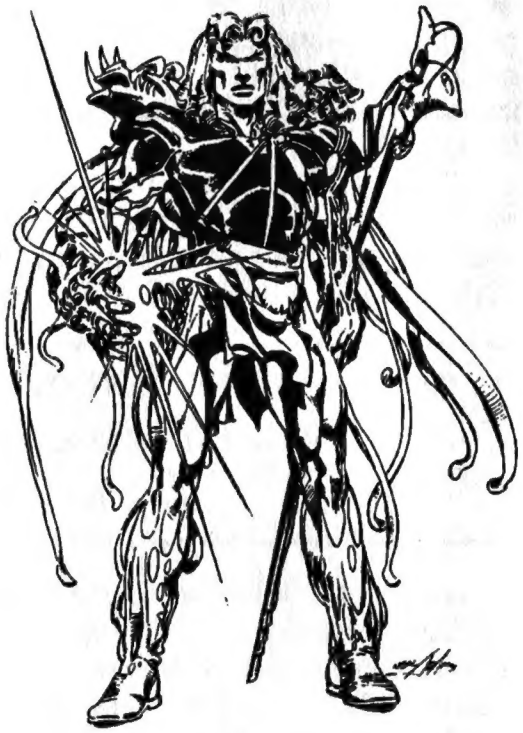
- Plastic album (not a 3-ring note book) with art on the cover
- Plasm "rookie" card
- Written intro to Defiant from Shooter (Defiant is milking the Shooter rep for all they can get out of it)
- Comic on splatterball, a game they play in Plasm (16 pages)
- You can buy back-cover art separately through mail order

PLASM

BEYOND THE IMAGINARY LIMITS™

Here's the key: The whole thing will be limited to a print run of 15,000. C'mon. Will it really be limited? According to Defiant, yes, it really will be limited, and if retailers order too many they will only get a percentage of what they ordered. Defiant is expecting that this will happen. In fact, they indicated to **Vantage** that they regret their promise to limit the print run to such a low figure, but they are determined to stick by their word.

YUM! That means there'll be



15,000 splatterball comics, 15,000 rookie cards, and 15,000 albums. Thanks to the rookie card, there will only be a possible 15,000 complete **Plasm #0 card sets** that can ever be formed! These items will be rare. If Defiant takes off (we think it will) the demand for these items will far outstrip the tiny supply.

On a different note, **Vantage** is somewhat concerned that the **Plasm #0 card set** will suffer due to an upcoming **full** reprint of the set in **Previews.** However, Defiant Publisher Jim Shooter feels this can only help Defiant: "The card people thought this was a good idea because it almost serves as a checklist to get your cards. I think it's a good idea to get people to read it."

He adds, "My Plasm #1 is listed in the same catalog. It's an amazingly good ad."

Watch for more comic/card sets from Defiant and additional titles (including one by Chris Claremont) more down to earth than Plasm. Shooter's new company has strong potential in general thanks to their commitment to top-notch storytelling and the strength of Shooter's rep for so successfully co-creating Valiant!

Plasm Logo and Artwork TM & © 1993 Enlightened Entertainment Partners, LP.

SPECIAL REPORT:

IMAGE COMICS

The amazing thing about Image is that it is creator-owned. That is, the characters at Image are owned by the artists who invented them. This gives Image artists the desire to turn out the best comics possible.

Image started out as a division of Malibu, but has since left that company to stand alone. Thus far, Image has done amazingly well with a strong market share (see market share article), and millions of copies sold per month.

All of the Image books show potential, but **Vantage** has its eye on three books in particular:

1) **Shamen's Tears.** This one's by Mike Grell whose amazing storytelling ability and artwork have propelled his books' value in the past. His past successes include **Green Arrow** and **Warlord.**

2) **Union.** Since we first started publishing **Vantage** many moons ago we have been promoting Texiera. Now he's doing an Image book that looks like it will feature some of his best artwork yet. Keep an eye on Tex's first **Wolverine,** #61. Oddly enough, some of Tex's earliest work includes filling in for Grell on **Warlord** which had prompted fans to complain that they wanted Grell back. Practice makes perfect: Tex has come a long way and we don't think they'd be complaining today.

3) **Savage Dragon** #2 (**Vanguard** #0). Vanguard will be a monthly Image title. It may go under-ordered due to the tremendous amount of product available this month.

Shaman's Tears TM & © 1993 Mike Grell
Savage Dragon TM & © 1993 Erik Larsen

Vantage #2

ULTRAVERSE: THE SECOND MONTH

The Ultraverse is being brilliantly marketed. **Three big factors** that can help the Ultraverse to gain value: 1. Send in coupons for #0 (creates demand for books with coupons) 2. Excellent writing (creates demand by readers for previous issues) 3. Heavy advertising (creates belief that Ultraverse is a serious endeavor that could gain value). Each one of these factors is key.

This month the Ultraverse pulls out some big guns under the banner of factor #2. Two new titles are introduced, each with a fantastic writer. If you doubt the power of writing in comics just look at history — Chris Claremont on the **X-Men**, Frank Miller on **Daredevil**, David Micheline (Yes, David Micheline — not just McFarlane) on **Spider-Man**, John Byrne on **Fantastic Four**. We could go on forever, but you get the point. If people like it, they'll collect it, and strong stories can help just as much as strong art!

The first big gun is veteran writer Gerard Jones on an ostracized-super-teens title. These kinds of books can do well (e.g., the original **Spider-Man**).

Ultraverse and Mantra TM & © 1993 Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

"A character named 'Choice' will play an important role in the Ultraverse universe"

Freex #1 features teens who have trouble dealing with their powers. The cover by Walter Simonson should help it sell well as a back-issue. Gerard Jones has written a ton of stuff for Marvel and several other companies.

Mantra #1 is by the second big gun, Mike W. Barr, whose writing has been nominated for both the coveted Eisner and Harvey awards. Mike has worked on titles like **Batman**, **Green Lantern**, and **Star Trek**. In **Mantra** #1 a soldier is reincarnated over and over in a mystical war between good and evil — but this time he's come back as a beautiful woman!

Sources indicate that a character named "Choice" will play an important role in the Ultraverse universe. Her first appearance will be in **Hardcase** #2. **This could be very important.**

The Ultraverse titles will have relatively low print runs. If the Ultraverse takes off, the books could gain some nice value. **Vantage** will be watching initial reactions to the Ultraverse very closely and we'll keep you posted.

VANTAGE QUICKIES

KNIGHTFALL: For those of you who missed last issue, "Knightfall" (the ongoing demise of Batman) is BIG, BIG, BIG! This is many dealers' biggest seller right now. Keep in kind that the EARLY Knightfall books have very low print runs (e.g., there are only around 125,000 #492's). They may be undervalued in your area.

Knightfall Back Issue Checklist and Price Guide

Batman

$12	#488 (Robin & Azrael team-up)
$15	#489 (Azr in BM uniform!!!, Bane)
$6	#490-491 (Bane)
$6	#492 (Knightfall #1)
$4	#493 (Knightfall #3)
$2	#494 (Knightfall #5)
$2	#495 (Knightfall #7)

Detective

$5	#657-658 (Azrael)
$4	#659 (Knightfall #2)
$2	#660 (Knightfall #4)
$2	#661 (Knightfall #6)

Vengeance of Bane

$17	#1 (First app. Bane)

Sword of Azrael

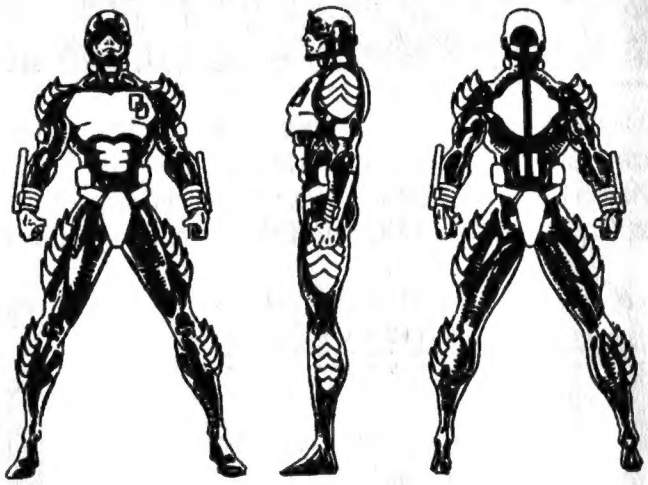
$15	#1 (First app. Azr)
$12	#2-4 (Azrael)

Batman and related indicia are TM of DC Comics © 1993 . All rights reserved.

The Azrael appearances are key because Azrael is, yes, going to be wearing Batman's costume in the near future. We also now know that Bruce Wayne will begin adventures, apparently not as Batman, in a storyline called **Knightquest Search** which starts off in **JLA Task Force**. **Knightquest Crusade** will involve the new Batman/Azrael and that storyline will run through **Batman** and **Detective**. For the **near future, Vantage** expects that Knightfall will continue to gain value, especially the earlier issues and those with appearances of Azrael (#489 is key).

Marvel: Daredevil is getting a new costume. The artwork on this page is a prototype under consideration. The change will be "permanent" and it is part of a major storyline involving the Kingpin (did somebody say "Miller"?). **X-Men** continues to rule, with back issues doing well at most shows.

Daredevil TM & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved.



PUBLISHER DOLLAR MARKET SHARES: MARKET SHARE WARS!

THE TOP FOUR COMIC PUBLISHERS IN MAY

	Mar	Ima**	DC	Val
Jan	46.5		19.6	6.3
Feb	38.9		16.0	11.0
Mar	44.7	16.3	12.1	10.8
Apr	24.3	18.4	33.1	11.0
May	29.3	24.4	19.1	12.3

OTHER PUBLISHERS:

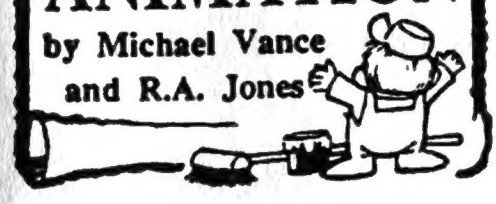
	Topps	DarH	Cont	Mal
Jan	*	4.0	*	16
Feb	1.8	4.7	*	18
Mar	1.6	3.1	*	*
Apr	3.6	2.8	1.4	*
May	3.0	2.6	1.5	1.2

Special thanks to Diamond Comics Distributors and their staff for providing Vantage with the above information.
* = not calculated by Diamond (generally not more than 3%)
** = No entry for Jan or Feb because Image was a division of Malibu during those months.

This month the market share war heats up as the gap continues to close between the larger publishers. Marvel once held the top position every month, but now they struggle to hold their ground! Marvel holds its #1 position this month thanks to its sheer quantity of titles while Image challenges Marvel with their smaller group of heavily printed titles. Marvel, however, is experiencing tremendous growth in dollar sales thanks to the amazing recent growth of the entire comic book industry. DC took an expected slide back from last month's Superdeath push. Valiant continues to grow sure and steady with its 1.3% increase. Look for big increases soon in Dark Horse, Malibu, Defiant, and other independents.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION

by Michael Vance and R.A. Jones



John Steinbeck considered them as important as novels, and Charlie Chaplin admired these 'movies without movement'.

There is a handful of strips that are read daily by more than 200 million readers, putting their sister arts to shame in popularity. But popularity isn't the only gauge of quality, and that is why Suspended Animation exists.

The purpose of this column is to review the best and worst in comics reading. We'll review comics written and drawn solely to entertain as well as comics with political, religious and philosophical slants. Some of you may discover for the first time that the Hulk and Batman television shows and the Superman movies are not representative of the field.

"In America, where graphic storytelling was created in newspapers, many adults think this art form is exclusively for children."

They captivated enormous audiences of adults and children long before radio, motion pictures, and television, enjoying a popularity that's now worldwide. Yet, in America, where graphic storytelling was created in newspapers, many adults think this art form is exclusively for children.

The truth however, is that there are COMIC BOOKS and STRIPS for adult reading, and they are capable of looking profoundly into the human condition. Comic books and strips aren't just for children anymore.

We'll point out books with violence, sex and tough language you'll decide are not for your children but are right for your tastes. And you may learn that some books written for children are just as fun when read by adults.

We hope you have fun.

A growing number of adults are discovering comics they'll enjoy reading. If you have a question or comments, or can't find a book reviewed, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: 1427 S. Delaware Ave., Tulsa OK 74104.

Comics Are For Reading First!

WE SAID IT, IT HAPPENED:

"Top Pick of the Month"
— **Vantage** on **X-O Manowar** #14 before it came out.

or.

"Highly recommended investment"
— **Vantage** on **Magnus** #21 when it was still at cover price.

"A hidden golden nugget!"
— **Vantage** on the completely original Deathmate comic featuring Solar and Profit that was bagged with **Advance Comics** #55.

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Vantage is the ONLY publication that takes comic book investing seriously. Now you can get a special pre-press edition of **Vantage** before your advance-order deadline!* Plus, you'll get our back-issue tips before anyone else! This is a special service which we will make available only to a limited number of subscribers. BONUS: Each issue will come with ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT INFO that only subscribers get to see! Dealers welcome!

Cool! I understand that I will get a special pre-press copy of VANTAGE, and that VANTAGE will get my copy to me before my store's (or mail order company's) ADVANCE ORDER DEADLINE! Plus I get ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT INFO! I'll make check or M.O. out to VANTAGE, Sub. Dept., 10238 W. National Ave, Suite 166, West Allis, WI 53227.

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For changes other than small corrections and minor adjustments, we will keep you updated.